

Message

From: Tighe, Julia W (DEC) [julia.tighe@dec.ny.gov]
Sent: 3/8/2018 4:58:56 PM
To: Lopez, Peter [lopez.peter@epa.gov]
CC: Seggos, Basil B (DEC) [Basil.Seggos@dec.ny.gov]
Subject: Fw: #Clips - Newsday: State drinking water panel: Removing 1,4-dioxane will be costly

As discussed

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone on the Verizon Wireless 4G LTE network.

From: Mahar, Sean C (DEC) <Sean.Mahar@dec.ny.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 8, 2018 11:54 AM
To: Tighe, Julia W (DEC)
Cc: Ringewald, Erica R (DEC)
Subject: FW: #Clips - Newsday: State drinking water panel: Removing 1,4-dioxane will be costly

Here you go

State drinking water panel: Removing 1,4-dioxane will be costly

Members of the panel spent the day balancing health impacts, economic burden and the ability of water suppliers to get treatment in place.



State Drinking Water Quality Council Chair Howard Zucker, M.D., center, the state commissioner of Health, takes part in a meeting of the council at Baruch College in Manhattan, Monday, Feb. 26, 2018. Photo Credit: Charles Eckert

By Emily C. Dooleyemily.dooley@newsday.com [@eDooleyNoted](#)Updated February 26, 2018 8:44 PM
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The state Drinking Water Quality Council, charged with recommending a safe standard for the chemical 1,4-dioxane, estimated Monday that removing the emerging contaminant could cost water suppliers in New York billions of dollars in capital spending and millions more each year to operate and maintain treatment systems.

The panel also discussed two other pollutants that are also not currently regulated federally.

The man-made 1,4-dioxane is found in trace amounts throughout Long Island's drinking water and the highest detection in the nation was measured at a well in Hicksville. The others chemicals are less pervasive in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

RECOMMENDED READING

Where else dioxane was found on LI

Chronic exposure to .35 parts per billion of 1,4-dioxane represents a 1-in-a-million cancer risk, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the panel, which met in Manhattan, is using that threshold as a starting point for discussions, members said.

"It's judged that 1-in-a-million is pretty protective," Thomas K.G. Mohr, a consultant and former senior hydrogeologist in California who was not at the meeting. "That's an effort to nearly eliminate the risk."

If the council recommended a level of .35 parts per billion for 1,4-dioxane, treatment would be required on 1,685 wells in New York, costing an estimated \$2.5 billion plus annual operations and maintenance fees of nearly \$253 million, said Brad Hutton, a deputy commissioner in the state Department of Health's Office of Public Health. At 3.5 parts per billion, costs are estimated at \$897 million plus \$62.6 million in annual costs.

The bulk of the costs would be incurred in Nassau and Suffolk, which far outpaced the rest of the state in the rate of dioxane detection.

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At .35 parts per billion, an estimated 94 wells in the Suffolk County Water Authority boundaries would need treatment at costs of about \$155 million for installation and \$14 million in annual charges. Serving 1.2 million customers, the authority is among the largest groundwater suppliers in the nation and Monday also won the first approval in New York to use a new type of treatment to remove 1,4-dioxane, which is not treated with methods conventionally used here.

“It could double the cost of water on Long Island,” said Dennis Kelleher, spokesman for Long Island Water Conference, a coalition of more than 50 water suppliers and industry professionals. “If we’re talking about hundreds of these in Nassau and Suffolk, certainly we’re going to need some grant money to control costs.”

In a day-long discussion, members of the panel — appointed by the governor or state Legislature — balanced the health impacts, economic burden and ability of water suppliers to get treatment in place. Later in March they will hold a special meeting with the goal of recommending a specific level for Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker to consider.

RECOMMENDED READING

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“No decision has been made,” said Stan Carey, a council member who is Superintendent of Massapequa Water District. “.35 is used by many people. That starts the conversation is all it really does.”

Steve Risotto, senior director for the industry-backed American Chemistry Council in Washington, urged the panel to wait for an EPA risk analysis and another study in Canada to be completed before making a decision.

“Wait until they finish,” he said. “This will allow you to collect more data.”

The state last set a drinking water regulation in 2004 for the gasoline additive MBTE. The limit — 10 parts per billion — represents a 1-in-a-million cancer risk, state Health Department research scientist Lloyd Wilson said.

RECOMMENDED READING

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Used as a solvent stabilizer and present as a byproduct in personal care products, 1,4-dioxane is classified as a probable carcinogen because it behaves as a tumor promoter in laboratory animals, said Mohr, who wrote a book about investigating and remediating 1,4-dioxane sites.

Several states have set regulations, notice levels or action concentrations for 1,4-dioxane ranging from 0.3 parts per billion in Massachusetts to 77 parts per billion in Alaska, according to an EPA fact sheet.

The range reflects the level of uncertainty about the risks of exposure, experts say. Most data are based on animal tests, which don't always correlate into human effects.

“There's quite a large range,” Mohr said. “In between these numbers comes millions of dollars in utility costs ... More difficult to quantify is health costs. There's just no real price you can put on the loss of life.” The two other chemicals under review by the panel — perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid, or PFOS — were also detected in New York and Long Island during a nationwide survey, though 1,4-dioxane was more prevalent locally.

RECOMMENDED READING

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Installing treatment on wells for the perfluorinated compounds range from \$300 million to \$3.2 billion in capital costs and from \$17.8 million to \$176 million in annual charges depending on the threshold set by the state.

